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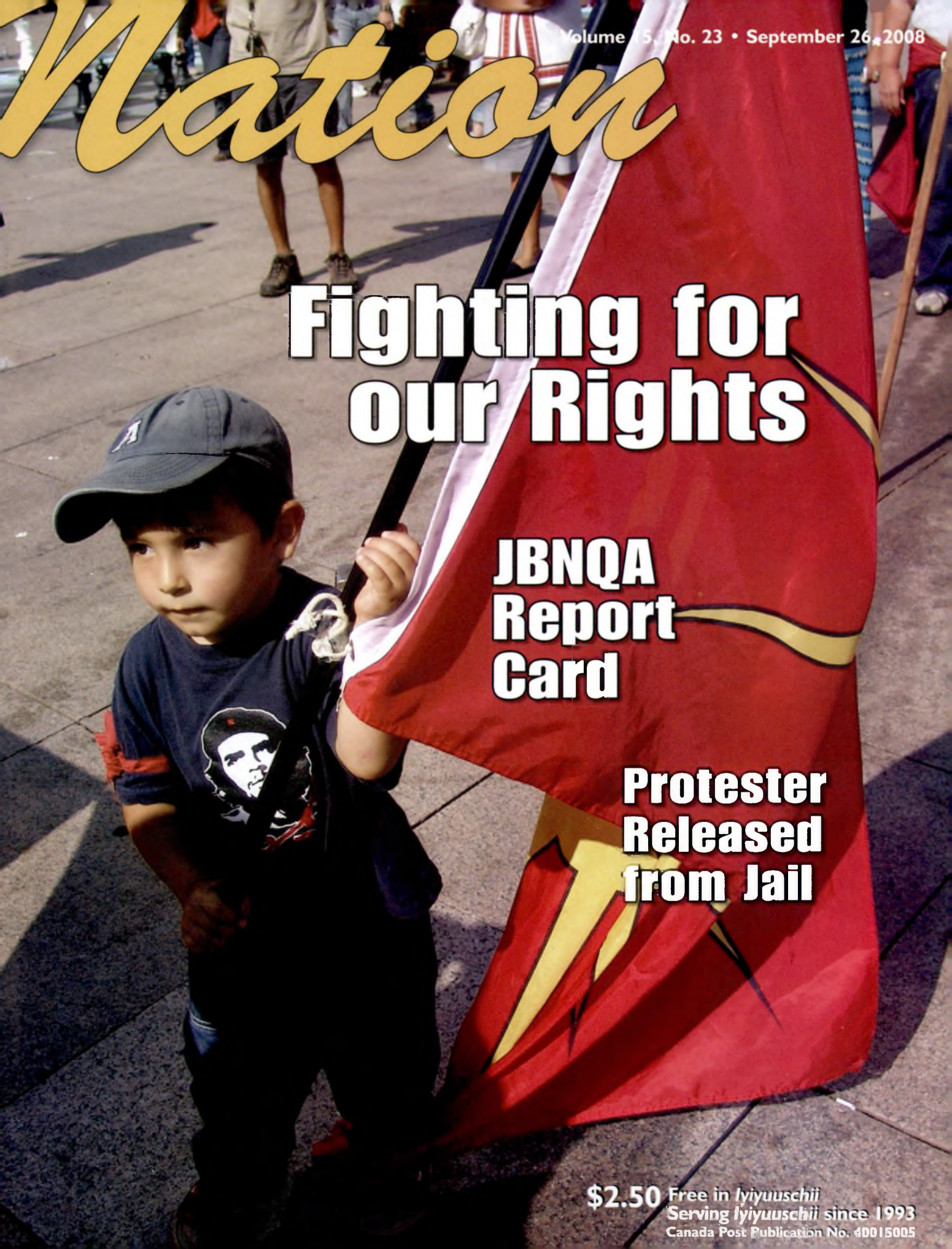

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editorial

Who let out the parents?

By Will Nicholls

It's hard growing up. It never stops and some days it doesn't seem to get any easier as you go along. After the none-too-carefree days of childhood you gather more and more responsibilities. It starts with school and when that ends you must look for some way of making a living.

A difficult prospect when you consider the economic times, especially in a First Nations community. The job prospects are limited and starting a business just out of school is no easy job in itself.

Then your next biggest step in your life is having children, married or not. Now not only are you responsible for your own life but you have another life that is totally dependent on you.

So now you are working a job, cleaning, cooking, buying diapers, looking for a babysitter or daycare and doing all the things needed to bring up a child while taking care of yourself. That's pretty much two jobs making personal time a difficult proposition at best.

Then on top of everything there's the extra things you do for your child(ren). You take them to baseball, hockey, broomball or other types of activities.

Everything seems fine until a local meeting. It might concern problems at the local schools. One of the first things you hear is more parental involvement is needed. You feel somehow blamed for the problems even though schools in the south don't seem to require the amount of parental involvement being asked for.

Another meeting happens. There's increasing vandalism or violence in the community. A curfew has been imposed and is not being respected by the youth. Parental commitment and participation is being stressed as the component to make this work by the local band and police forces.

As a parent, though, you can't really enforce anything as it is against the law to spank children in Quebec or confine them. Meaning you aren't allowed to even send them to their rooms. They could send Social Services after you and you would be labeled a bad parent.

It's almost enough to make one never want children as the responsibilities are piled on you by organizations that seem to be inadequate to do their jobs without you.

No parent can watch each of their children 100 per cent of the time. Nor can they afford 24-hour or around-the-clock babysitters or guards to ensure their children are safe or not causing trouble.

Yes, parents must take responsibility. Many say that residential school took First Nations children away from their parents and now they lack the parenting skills that normally get passed on from generation to generation. It may even be true but there is a video out created by the Cree Nation Youth Council called The Power of Parenting that can help.

It shows that while parents play an important role, it takes a community to raise a child. Everyone and every organization has to be involved in making things work and pick up their share of the burden. Then we can become whole and healthy communities again that share a life and a vision for the future.

MISSING

Maisy Odjick, 16, and Shannon Mathewski Alexander, 17, from Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg in Maniwaki, Quebec have been missing since Saturday, September 5th 2008. Maisy has brown eyes and short brown hair; she also has 2 piercings on her bottom lip and on her left nostril. If anyone has seen either of these girls please contact our local police @819-449-6000, or Maisy's mom, Laurie Odjick, @ 819-441-3055.Please pass on this information to anyone you may know.

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on the cover:
A young native protester from Mexico

photo by:
Will Nicholls

Taking care of business...

By Sonny Orr

Making money, making business, making something for money and even selling money – it's called business. As I speak, some diehard stockbrokers are probably nearing the window sill in preparation to jump out in some of the world's worst trading sprees ever, where even a large multinational-billion dollar money trader Merrill Lynch goes under into bankruptcy.

Closer to home, the venerable Hudson Bay Company sold out months back to an American interest. Even closer to home, electricity generated in James Bay sells out wholesale and lower priced to the States. In our backyard, softwood lumber is taking a beating and causing our own agreement to slow down in supposed revenue-sharing in logging.

At home, trying to make it to pay for every increase in living, energy, transportation and entertainment (which is totally necessary up north, because we're bored enough already with bad news from the south) is taking its toll on your everyday Joe and Jane meagre pocketbooks. What's a guy got to do today to make ends meet?

To start with, take a good long look at the successful entrepreneur, and an even harder look at the unsuccessful entrepreneur. To make it easier for those who cannot understand financial matters, bottom lines (I said bottom lines, not tan lines), break-even points and balance sheets, inventory turn-over and debit and credits, I made a comparative analysis to differentiate between success and failure in business.

Successful entrepreneurs do the following:

- Save every penny, while the other laggards sweep the pennies into the garbage at clean-up time;

- Put their bills in accounts payable, then pay them as soon as they can, while others wait for the creditors to come knocking before paying up or inventing some absurd story, like the dog ate all the notices;

- Make daily reports and deposit their funds immediately, when the others spend their money before depositing the leftover change;

- Keep a wary eye out for thieves, five-finger discounters and other vermin; the failing business welcomes them in over and over again to rip them off with open arms;

- Don't believe in credit; while credit customers seem to be the only ones at the losers' counter;

- Open and close on time every business day while the other poor dude still has one eye open and is yawning a full hour after opening time, complaining about no one to do the work for them;

- Take some time off for families (albeit it is a very worrisome time for them), when family time is the only time all the time, and no time for business for those who dared take a stab at business with eight children all under the age of 10;

- Stay in business longer and for years before selling out or closing; while the others have going out of business sales and signs declaring closure for years;

- Are able to retire young or old, when the others have tried several times to start their business and now near retirement age penniless.

Making money successfully just means taking good care of business!

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The Worth of a Modern Treaty

Though the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was the first of its kind as a modern Aboriginal land claim agreement, a new study questions its effectiveness

By Amy German

The Institute for Research on Public Policy has just released a study, "Aboriginal Quality of Life under a Modern Treaty: Lessons from the Experience of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and the Inuit of Nunavik", suggesting that though life may have improved dramatically over the last 30 years for both the Crees of Eeyou Istchee and the Inuit of Nunavik, things might have progressed just as well without the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Martin Papillon, an assistant professor at the School of Political Studies of the University of Ottawa and author of the study, wanted to examine whether the people living under the JBQNA were better off than those living in similar northern communities across Canada and to see where living conditions and quality of life were better. The results were surprising, even for him.

By comparing statistical data on housing, health, employment, income and education between places like the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut to those under the JBQNA, Papillion found similarities between all of the communities, even though some were not under treaties. In fact, when it came to certain issues those under the JBQNA actually fared worse.

"They are not necessarily the worst," said Papillon. "But they're definitely worse off in things like overall housing, the level of education, control over the natural-resource sector and employment. The raw numbers suggest that they are not better off than those in the Yukon or in Nunavut."

According to the statistical data presented in the study, the Cree and the Kativik School Boards have the province's highest drop-out rate at 75% and housing conditions in northern Quebec are among the worst in the country and have not improved in the past 10 years. Incomes are exponentially lower in the north than in the south, particularly when the cost of living in the north is taken into account. The rate of infant morality in both Eeyou Istchee and Nunavik is still more than three times higher than in the rest of Quebec.

In the study, Papillon points out how there is this false pretense about those under the JBQNA as though they were "the spoiled children of the federation," because of the amount of money they received in exchange for allowing hydro development. What never gets taken into consideration is how those first major transfers were all for infrastructure and that the sheer cost of building schools, health facilities, roads and airports was massive.

"Since then, the transfer of money on a sort of per capita basis is not that different from what a non-Aboriginal community in northern Quebec would receive on a governmental basis," said Papillon.

According to Papillon, the failures attributed to the JBQNA fall mainly on the government as once the treaty was written "it fell through the cracks." There were no governmental bodies responsible for the agreement and in the first years of its inception both the Cree and the Inuit spent much of their time fighting to have it implemented.

The government also saw the structures created under the JBQNA as "administrative arms of the federal and provincial governments," limiting their scope of the Crees and the Inuits and constraining them far more than they envisioned.

"What I am saying about the JBQNA, and this is the important message, is that it was not enough. What really changed for the James Bay Cree and the Inuit is that the land claim agreement was a basis to start with but what really made the difference over time and is starting now to make a difference in terms of quality of life is the way that they use it as a basis to challenge what is going on at the federal and provincial policy level," said Papillon.

"(The James Bay Cree) are definitely worse off in things like overall housing, the level of education, control over the natural-resource sector and employment."

For as much as he agreed that it was hard to quantify the political transformation within these communities as result of the JBQNA, the agreement itself brought about a type of "political cohesion," that did not exist previously that in itself could bring about the fulfillment of the agreement's intentions.

In creating the political presence of the Grand Council of the Crees, the Cree Regional Authority and the Makivik Corporation as a result of the JBQNA, more power has been given to the north when it comes to battling governments and creating a confidence amongst these First Nations groups.

For as much as Papillon has posed the question as to whether the Cree and the Inuit would have the same quality of life as other northern Native communities had they not signed the JBQNA, the real answer is hard to find as perception on quality of life is such a variable and not defined by statistical data. At the same time, in that this was the first modern treaty implemented within Canada, it has proven to be "panacea for the problems of northern Aboriginal communities," for as much as there is a tremendous amount to be learned from the experience.

For a copy of the study, go to: www.irpp.org/indexe.html

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Make your opinion count!

As a member of the community of **Mistissini, Nemaska, Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji** or **Chisasibi**, you may be asked to **participate in an opinion survey** starting September 22, 2008.

The survey is being carried out in cooperation with the Crees, as part of the environmental monitoring of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert diversion project.

Centrale de l'Eastmain-1-A et dérivation Rupert

Société d'énergie de la Baie James

The **main objectives** of this survey are to:

- ✔ follow-up on quality of life and social relations in the Cree communities,
- ✔ gather Cree perceptions about the project, and
- ✔ find out how the communities are being informed about the project.

The survey will be carried out by an independent research firm, with the help of Cree interviewers.

In accordance with the standard methods used in this type of survey, respondents will be chosen at random and all answers are confidential. Cree respondents should feel free to express their views on the topics mentioned above.

The Prongs of Fighting Oppression

Robert Lovelace believes First Nations need to "look beyond the blockades" and work on strengthening quality of life for their people

By Amy German

Having served 103 days in jail for defying a court order for staging protests at a potential uranium mining site near Sharbot Lake, Ontario, college professor and retired Ardoch Algonquin Chief Robert Lovelace has no regrets about serving time but questions what his sentence has done for freedom of speech.

Last February Lovelace was sentenced to six months in jail and fined $25,000 by Justice Douglas Cunningham in Kingston, Ontario for protests on the property of the Frontenac Ventures Corporation because the Algonquins believed that the testing the mining company was doing for uranium was on his First Nation's traditional territory.

Lovelace, along with his co-Chief Paula Sherman, were both charged with contempt of court after staging a tent city at the entrance of the mining site over the course of several weeks during the late summer and early fall of 2007. When Cunningham made his ruling, Frontenac's lawyer Owen Young demanded a "harsh punishment" for Lovelace to dissuade others from following in his footsteps.

Coincidentally, Young is also the lead lawyer in the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Though Lovelace was released from jail through the appellate court after serving 3 months of his sentence, since his release Frontenac has still been favoured by the Ontario courts system. Just recently the Ontario court of appeals granted the Ardoch Algonquin lawyers $50,000 – $40,000 from Frontenac Ventures and an additional $10,000 from the province of Ontario – to pay for the costs of overturning Lovelace's sentence. After that ruling, Judge Cunningham granted $100,000 to Frontenac to be paid by Ardoch.

"He must think he got the last laugh in that," said Lovelace in regards to Cunningham's ruling.

"We know from our research that Judge Cunningham was a political advisor to Brian Mulroney during the Oka Crisis and one of the proponents of bringing in the army. We also knew that from people who are close to Judge Cunningham that he does not like Indians," he explained.

Lovelace believes that Frontenac was naive and misguided in entering into the mining dispute with First Nations communities and that the dispute has sullied its reputation. What is even more alarming to him is the long-term impact that the ruling will have on the legal system.

At the same time, Lovelace sees the positive in his sentencing as he believes that it serves as a wake-up call for Aboriginal groups in Canada who are fighting for their lands amidst post-9/11 conservatism where the word "terrorist" is thrown around only too lightly.

"People have self-censored themselves and tend to just stay away from hot political issues in which direct action might be the only recourse," said Lovelace.

"IT'S SAD THAT THOSE TRADITIONAL VALUES HAVE ACTUALLY WORKED AGAINST US AND INVITED COLONIALISM UPON US."

As a fervent believer in Canadians' democratic right to speak their mind and the rights of Indigenous peoples to fight colonialism, Lovelace is hoping that his stiff sentence does not prevent others for fighting for their rights.

For as much as he believes that both the province of Ontario and Judge Cunningham were looking to dissuade Indigenous peoples from taking action to help their communities, Lovelace doesn't think it will happen.

"What concerns me more is that as Aboriginal people we have to engage in resistance. We are slowly becoming cultures of resistance and that is just another way that we are drawn away from our traditional values of getting along with others and avoiding conflict. It's sad that those traditional values have actually worked against us and invited colonialism upon us," said Lovelace.

But, instead of cowering in the face of colonialism, Lovelace believes that First Nations need to "look beyond the blockades" and work on strengthening quality of life for their own people in everything from daycares to old-age homes instead of devoting their full efforts to fighting oppression.

In his mind there is no one tactic that Aboriginals should adopt in fighting for lands but go at it with an integral five-pronged approach.

The first tactic is "research" to fully understand the issues in regards to not only old customs and traditions and their meanings but also the intentions of the Crown and business.

The second prong is "community education" which Lovelace sees as something that needs to start from within the community but not end there.

"We need to be working from our community outward to inform others as to what the issues are because a lot of Canadians simply don't know what to think about the problems. They don't have the information to be able to formulate clear and logical ideas."

The third prong is direct action to not only bring economic pressure upon those who are proponents of unwanted development or polluters to let them know that they can't get away with what they are doing but to also raise social awareness.

The fourth prong is legal action and knowing the law. "We have to work within the context of the Canadian government to some extent but we also have to be cognizant of our own customary laws and apply them where they should be applied," said Lovelace.

The last prong, and Lovelace explained that this was what he is now investing more time into, is healing.

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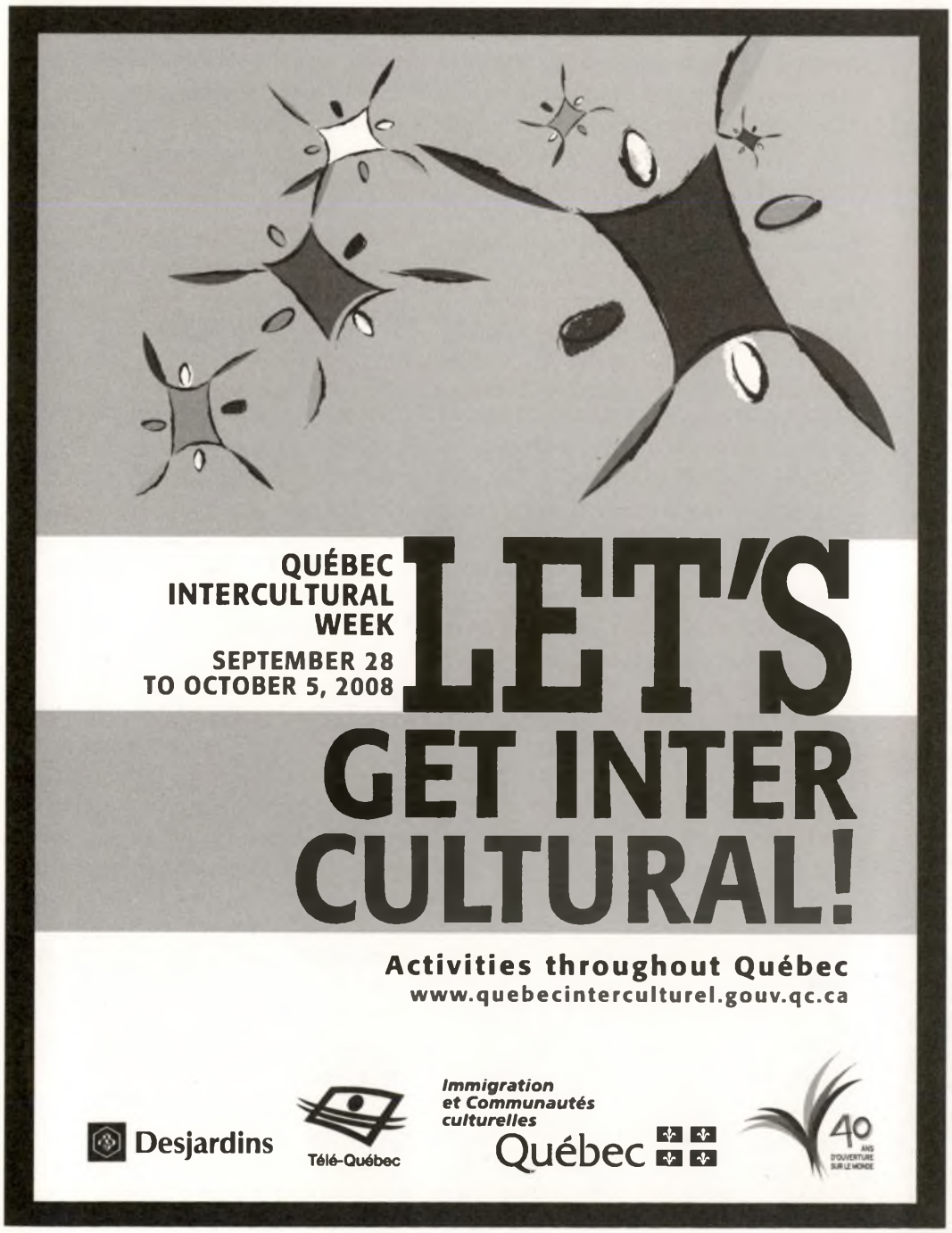
Bioprospectors head north for Arctic DNA.

For a long time, oil and gas were seen as the Arctic's most valuable resource. But a new report shows that another resource has been discovered in the north; genetics.

43 companies are already either selling or developing products derived from the DNA found in Arctic plants and animals. David Leary, international lawyer with the United Nations University's Institute of Advanced Studies, thinks however that Canada may not be taking advantage of all it has to offer.

The Arctic's unique environment has helped scientists use compounds from organisms that evolved to life at near-zero or even subzero environments. Some companies for example, are using so-called "antifreeze proteins" found in Arctic plants and animals as a way to improve the taste, texture and safety of frozen foods.

"Nature provides a lot of inspiration," said Leary.



Wildlife Sanctuaries on Inuit Territory

August 22 was an important day for the Inuit people living in the surrounding areas of the Baffin Island. Canada's Environment Minister John Baird and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Acting President, James Eetoolook, announced that three new National Wildlife Areas will be built on and around Baffin Island.

The Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement for National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the Nunavut Settlement Area, was negotiated between the Government of Canada and different Inuit company's and organizations. Under this agreement, the Government of Canada has promised $8.3 million.

"This is a real demonstration of our commitment to protect our species and their incredible habitat in the North," said Minister Baird.

Another positive aspect of this is the economic opportunities this will provide for the local people. It will enable residents to develop environmentally sustainable tourism businesses and create jobs.

The federal Government is firmly committed to the protection, improvement and conservation of our country's natural legacy.

Abitibi-Est Parti Quebecois MLA Alexis Wawanoloath

KUT Radio's Native Solidarity News producer Irkar Beljarrs

feature

Move over Indian Act

Marking the first-year anniversary of the United Nations adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, hundreds took to the Montreal streets to make their voices heard

By Amy German

On Saturday, September 13, people came from all over Quebec, Ontario, Hawaii, Ecuador, Chile and the States to walk alongside Montrealers as hundreds took to the streets in protest of the Canadian government's refusal to adopt the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

At 2pm the crowds descended on Emilie-Gamelin Park above the Berri metro station to take in a series of activist speeches delivered from a flatbed truck before marching along de Maisoneuve Boulevard to Dorchester Square. Before the march began, a Mohawk Elder blessed the spiritual and political event. The march itself was led by the truck which carried a Mohawk drummer circle that played periodically amidst chanting, slogans and Indigenous pop music in a strange juxtaposition against the urban setting.

Though the event was organized by the Aboriginal Student Circle of the Université du Québec à Montréal, when the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador's Chief, Ghislain Picard, heard about the event, the AFNQL was only too happy to lend its name officially to the event and participate.

"This UN declaration is a reality now, regardless as to Canada's position. We know that Australia is reconsidering its position so I think the more we go with this, the more isolated the Canadian government will find itself," said Picard in an interview with *the Nation*.

Picard addressed the crowds prior to the actual march and at the march's final destination. His main message was for the government to end colonialism and replace the Indian Act with a First Nation Charter. Since the march took place in the middle of a federal election campaign, Picard had a message for both the present and future governments.

"The first challenge, for the next government of Canada, and for the government of Quebec, is to support the minimum standards for the survival of Indigenous people included in the Declaration. All organizations, civil groups and citizens of Quebec and Canada must continue their outcry against those governments that take positions that refuse to recognize, and jeopardize the human rights of all peoples."

Marching alongside Picard to help him hold up the AFNQL banner was Abitibi-Est Parti Québécois MLA Alexis Wawanoloath who was also there to show his fervent support of the UN Declaration. For Wawanoloath, getting the Declaration adopted was a provincial matter before federal.

"I think that with our history we might be able to adopt it quicker," he said with a charismatic smile as campaigning was clearly never far from his mind.

Amnesty International had its own delegation at the event and was also one of the demonstration's sponsors. Charles Peroux, an activism coordinator for Amnesty's Canadian francophone section, felt it was necessary to show his presence not just to fight for Indigenous rights but to try and rally local support as many are so focused on the plight of foreign struggles and not the plight of the third world within Canada.

"Recently we have been doing a lot of work on China because of the Olympics and a lot of our own members are criticizing China for what they are

doing to Tibet. But on the other end, we have just about the same thing going on here and in some cases it's even worse for those on some reserves in Quebec. Sure it sounds great for everyone to be working on Tibet but even for us it's hard to get a lot of our members to give a damn," said Peroux.

As Canada was shamed earlier on this year by Amnesty for its treatment of its Indigenous women, various court rulings and land-rights issues, Amnesty members at the rally were there not just there to reinforce their message but to remind the public that human rights are for everyone.

"I think that it's very important that we be here to show support and that it is not only an Indigenous issue that this effects everyone and when we lower the standards for one part of the population, we lower it for everybody else," said Peroux.

Despite the long distance between their home and Montreal, many Algonquins had made the journey from Lac Simon to represent themselves and their own struggles. Among them was their chief, Daniel Pien.

"In Quebec the French language has protection and we don't have that protection. If you look you will find that English as an official language is protected too but no First Nation language is protected. That is why we have to tell who we are and why we want protection for our territory. The territory is the land and the Creator gave us a place to stay and enjoy our life so we have to say who we are so we'll have the privilege to enjoy our lives today," said Chief Pien.

In that many of the Algonquins of the Abitibi-Temaskamingue region are not under the Indian Act, Third World-living conditions abound in these communities, those like the people of Lac Simon are some of the most dramatically affected by Canada's refusal to adopt the Declaration.

Out with her daughter who works for the Quebec Native Woman's Association, the Cree Health Board's Diane Reid was only too happy to take part in the demonstration for herself and on behalf of the Cree Nation.

"I have spent most of my life being a social activist throughout the world for Indigenous rights so this is a day that is important for me as a Native person but especially as a Native woman because I am a grandmother. There are future generations to come of our children and grandchildren and we have to protect their rights," said Reid.

As an activist, taking to the streets was familiar territory for Reid and a right that she felt was necessary to combat the complacency that so many people experience when it comes to Indigenous issues.

"I think that people get to be too much in a comfort zone of day-to-day life, walking out in the streets is a way of creating some awareness about Native people and their causes because people tend to feel that what we don't see we don't worry about," said Reid, who considered the march a sacred event.

Amongst the marching masses, Andreas, a Chilean expatriate, marched alongside his girlfriend, carrying his placard and hollering like the best of them. As a Chilean, he could no doubt sympathize with the plight of Canada's Indigenous people.

"We had no other reason to be anywhere else other than here today because this is the most important day to be here. In a broad sense we are talking about the self-determination of a people at a time when this is under attack and civil rights are under attack. In Canada, we don't have a perfect guarantee of our rights either and so these are all struggles that are linked," said Andreas.

Stephano from Ecuador who was marching a few feet away felt similarly. Having devoted his life to working with Indigenous peoples, he felt it necessary to show his presence at the event. "I feel very close to the problems that Indigenous people face here in Canada in terms of their fight for their rights," he said.

Wearing traditional garb, Jack Watson from the Odanak Reserve Band Council was jovial about expressing his dissent at the demonstration. Having traveled to Montreal with a delegation of community members from his reserve to reunite

"IN QUEBEC THE FRENCH LANGUAGE HAS PROTECTION AND WE DON'T HAVE THAT PROTECTION. IF YOU LOOK YOU WILL FIND THAT ENGLISH AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IS PROTECTED TOO BUT NO FIRST NATION LANGUAGE IS PROTECTED."

Steve Williams Benedict

with those from Odanak who were now living in Montreal, Watson took pride in marching with his own community.

"It's a great and pleasant day to come and express our dissatisfaction with the federal government. We fully support this event!" said Watson amidst crowd of his peers.

Marching in Hawaiian traditional garb to show off his many traditional tattoos, Paul Richard Palmelo Kawanassnai III, an Indigenous exchange student at McGill University, carried a placard with a message about his own people that stated: We are not Americans.

Speaking about the plight of his own people who were once a kingdom before the United States claimed their traditional lands, Kawanassnai was passionate about the troubles all North American Indigenous people face under oppression.

"Americans just came in and took our kingdom away. They killed our people and desecrated our land, so speaking for myself and a lot of other Native Hawaiians back home, we want freedom! We want our independence and we want our land and we want our rights back and that will never happen with the attitude of the United Sates. It's just like the unwillingness in Canada where they won't even consider Indigenous rights," he said.

As the demonstration progressed through the city streets led by the drone of the drums and chants, no one individual was more vocal at the rally than CKUT Radio's Native Solidarity News producer Irkar Beljarrs, who drummed and spoke frequently over a microphone from the flatbed.

"I am here drumming for a good cause, I did not expect to speak as much as I did," said Beljarrs who had never drummed in public before.

"I CAN GUARANTEE IF THESE WERE 700 SUV-DRIVING SUBURBAN SOCCER MOMS WHO WERE MISSING, THE MILITARY WOULD BE MOBILIZED."

Throughout the event Beljarrs was also persistent in reminding those demonstrating that this march was not just about a Declaration but Canada's negligence towards its Indigenous women as, according to the Native Woman's Association of Canada's new numbers, there are now 700 missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women and children who have fallen off the map.

"It's that idea that because someone is poor that makes it easier to take advantage of and unfortunately we live in such a society where there are so many predators around and nothing is being done... I can guarantee if these were 700 SUV-driving suburban soccer moms who were missing, the military would be mobilized," said Beljarrs.

As the marchers reached the city's core where the event culminated, hundreds of passers-by stopped to watch the protest with cameras and cellphones in hand to record the event out of curiosity. For as much as there is an apparent lack of interest for Indigenous issues within the mainstream media, the crowd reaction to the demonstration proved that other medias exist and this fight can be played out online.

Though the fight for Indigenous rights may not be omnipresent on Canada's airwaves, with every footstep that was taken on that bright and sunny Saturday afternoon, awareness grew, heads turned and questions were asked by those who did not know.

The fight to have the UN Declaration on Indigenous rights is not over and as the battle cries rang out, the struggle rages on.

Moving on up!

As the Public Health Department of the Cree Health Board prepares to move their Montreal offices to Mistissini, a dream is realized but at the cost of many of the board's employees

By Amy German

According to the Health Board's Chairperson, Dianne Reid, when the board repatriated the public health department from the Montreal General Hospital, it did so with the vision in mind that the board itself would one day be a facility run from one of the communities.

A LOT OF THEM DON'T FEEL THAT THEIR FAMILIES CAN MOVE WITH THEM TO MISTISSINI, ...IT'S SAD THAT PEOPLE HAVE TO QUIT OVER (THE) RELOCATION."

Along the way the decision to actually do so became a concrete concept in 2003 but the infrastructure required to facilitate the move was unavailable as there was no community with the housing or office space available for the employees.

That was until two years ago when the Minsitry of Health decided to hand over an envelope to pay for 48 new housing units for the Board's employees and with the projected opening of a new clinic in Mistissini, the Health Board actually began to take shape as a foreseeable reality.

As the housing for the project was slated to be completed for September 2008, back in July, the announcement was made that the big move would take place as of October 17th, a decision that will affect 59 employees.

"It is true that it affects a lot of people but the majority of them are non-native professionals that work in the public health sector and it does impact on their future roles, whether they will stay working with the health board or move on," said Reid.

For as much as the Board's employees have known about the looming move since 2003, in that the announcement was made in July for an October move, the Board could be facing a massive employee exodus.

"A lot of them don't feel that their families can move with them to Mistissini, I think that is one of the main reasons and it's sad that people have to quit over relocation of a whole department of the Cree Nation because those services are needed in the communities," said Reid.

Claude Cornellier, a nurse in charge of CSST's Healthy Workplace program, is frustrated over the move because the employees that are being moved to the North are only those with fulltime, permanent status and as a temporary employee working on a pilot project, he will lose his job along with many other temporary and part time workers.

"We are not against the principal of regrouping the CHB's employees within the Cree territory, we are not questioning that, what we are questioning is their method that they are using to do so," said Cornellier.

According to Cornellier, there is a lot of dissent amongst the Health Board's workers as not only have they been given short term notice that they and their families will either have to relocate or lose their jobs but that so far, as only the housing is ready, all of the relocated employees will be working from home until the offices are ready.

Though the Health Board did hire consultants to advise them on moving their employees to the North, Cornellier said that the Board ignored their advice to move their employees slowly over an 18 month period and went with the July to October plan instead.

As a result of the quick move Reid is anticipating possible service gaps as not only will rehiring for those leaving the board only start after the October 17th

Dianne Reid

move, it will require time to retrain the new employees to get them up to speed on the various programs and services that the board offers that are unique to the Cree communities.

"Well the reality will be because people are choosing to leave their positions and not move to the communities, there will be gaps in implementing the programs of promotion of health that were developed by these people but it is part of the reality of change and we have to live with those gaps until we are able to solidify each position again in the Cree communities," said Reid.

For as much as Reid acknowledges the tremendous amount of hard work that has gone into developing these programs and services, as the board feels its necessary to move forward with the decision and deal with the consequences later.

At press time there were no solid numbers available on how many employees would actually be moving to the North or what kinds of service gaps could occur as a result of the move. *The Nation* Magazine will be following this story as it unfolds.

HOW GREEN IS THE PARTY

BY MANON LEGAULT

Where do the five major Canadian political parties stand when it comes to the environment?

I consider myself an environmentalist, but no matter how hard I try, I am at a complete loss on who to vote for in this federal election. I can tell you who I will not vote for, or who I might vote for, but I am totally undecided.

If you are undecided as well, and the environment is an important factor for you in this election, here are some key environmental points for each party. (If you need detailed information on what a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system is and how it works, please see www.sierraclub.ca)

The Conservative Party

According to the Sierra Club, the Conservatives got a grade of F+ for their environmental policy. First, they do not plan to adopt a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system.

This may sound good to many Canadians, who wants to pay more taxes?

The Conservatives plan to reduce emissions to 3% of 1990 levels by 2020, or 20% below 2006 levels by 2020. They plan to regulate industry, build greener facilities, and contribute to a Technology Fund that aims to develop emissions reduction technology. There is no certainty, with their plan, that emissions from industry will decrease.

The New Democratic Party

According to the Sierra Club, the NDP gets a B. They plan to reduce emissions by 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Their proposal also introduces Canada Environment Action Bonds to raise capital for the plan's goals. They'll make polluters pay for the real costs of pollution through a cap-and-trade system that rewards big polluters who reduce emissions, and punishes those who don't. This would reduce emissions from industry 50% below current levels by 2030. They do not plan to introduce a carbon tax.

They plan to help families make the transition to a sustainable economy with a $750 million green-collar jobs fund. They plan to ensure greener homes and cities with an average of almost $1 billion a year for public transport and an energy-efficiency retrofit program.

They will also continue to fight to halt new tar-sands development until emissions are capped.

In this election, the NDP have pledged $8 billion over four years to create "green-collar" jobs and industries that includes help for the auto industry to design and produce environmentally friendly cars and trucks. Their plan would also retrain workers for "green-collar" jobs in the environmental industry and invest in research and development tax credits.

The Liberal Party

For their environmental plan, the Sierra Club gives the Liberals a B+. They plan to reduce emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.

The plan is simple. They will cut taxes on income, investment and innovation, and shift those taxes to pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and waste. The carbon tax will be 100% revenue-neutral. It will be monitored by the Auditor General every year to make sure that the money taken from Canadians goes towards the environment.

They will also introduce a cap-and-trade system. They plan to create new, well-paying, green jobs to boost the economy.

They also plan to have a fairer and more progressive tax system so that they can help all Canadians become part of the solution to the climate change crisis while protecting lower- and middle-income Canadians and more vulnerable Canadians from rising energy costs.

The Green Party

The Greens have the best environmental plan. According to the Sierra Club, they get an A-. They plan to lower emissions by 30% below 1990 levels by 2020.

They plan to implement a carbon tax and a cap-and-trade system. The carbon tax will be applied throughout the entire economy, and will be a lot steeper than that of any other party. The cap-and-trade system plans to reduce emissions from industry to 47% from today's levels by 2020.

They also plan to work on air quality, water protection and conservation, national parks, species at risk, toxic chemicals, zero waste, the commercial seal hunt, animal welfare, the Green Arctic strategy, and measuring and protecting Canada's natural accounts.

The problem with the Green Party is that they don't have much of a platform besides the environment, but if they get seats, they can make a bigger difference.

The Bloc Québécois

According to the Sierra Club, the Bloc Québécois gets a B. They plan to reduce emissions by 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

They do not plan to introduce a carbon tax but will introduce a cap-and-trade system. It will not be done on a national scale but instead, they will allow each province to develop its own system to meet Canada's emissions reduction target. In this plan, provinces will be able to trade emission targets and there will be severe fines for those who don't comply with their cap.

The Bloc also wants to abolish subsidies for the oil and gas industries.

This is how David Suzuki put it in his last newsletter: "I can't tell you which party to vote for; I'm not even sure which one I'll vote for! But I can say that it's vitally important for all Canadians to put the environment at the top of the agenda in this election. That means becoming informed about the issues and the various party positions on those issues and asking the candidates some direct questions."

It might seem like it will cost money to fix the environment, and that some of us would have to sacrifice our way of life, but that

continued on page 22

GRUBBING FOR ABORIGINAL VOTES

It's election season again and with it comes an endless stream of promises for better lives for Aboriginals

By Amy German

It's always funny how what seems most out of reach from the federal government prior to an election period can suddenly be dangled before the eyes of voters like a carrot on a string. Though most of the major parties have not unveiled their full election platforms as of yet, the Nation was able to get some info on what a vote for each party would mean for Aboriginal peoples.

The Bloc Québécois

According to Abitibi-Témiscamingue MP Marc Lemay, the Bloc "is the only party that represents Aboriginals."

Lemay believes that Quebec's Aboriginals would be best served voting for his party because "the Bloc has been totally in favour of recognizing nation-to-nation dialogues with the First Nations and we have maintained that," and at that he feels that their platform is very complete.

The Bloc views the approach of Indian and Northern Affairs as "totally paternalistic," and wants to provide better education programs so that First Nations have the same standard of education as the general population.

Lemay also said that he would seek to remove INAC's 2% cap on capital funds for infrastructure since that figure has remained stagnant since 1996.

Housing is another major issue for the Bloc. In Quebec alone over 10, 000 housing units are needed "urgently and not in five years" for First Nations.

According to Lemay, the Bloc supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and is urging the government to recognize the declaration.

The other major issues that the Bloc has on its platform are reintroducing the Kelowna Accord, working on cooperation between the government and First Nations communities and blocking matrimonial rights Bill C-47 from becoming law so that Aboriginals will be able to retain land-claim rights.

The Conservative Party

Conservative candidate Jean-Maurice Matte believes that a vote for his party is the best way to go because it is better to work with the Conservative government than against it.

As education is also a priority election campaign promise from the Conservatives, Matte mentioned the party's recent work in helping to bring about the First Nations' Pavilion at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue which will be devoted to Aboriginal higher learning.

With the success of that project, Matte wants local Aboriginal communities to work together and "to find a way to get to know each other better." He also cited recent hydro projects as an area where the Conservative government worked successfully with the Crees in particular. "The Cree Nation and all Quebecers got benefits from that project," he said.

Matte acknowledged that the UN Declaration was a sensitive issue for the Conservatives, but said he would do his best to bring the issue to the table.

"With discussion and by sitting at the same table, we will find a way that the UN Declaration or some other declaration would be signed," said Matte.

In regards to housing Matte said the Conservatives would identify the need and work to make sure that money is available for adequate housing for First Nations.

The Liberal Party

Though the Liberals are not yet finished unveiling their campaign platform and have assured *the Nation* that there is much more to come from the part for Aboriginal voters, Liberal Party spokesperson Joseph Mayer was able to provide some campaign tidbits.

With a Liberal government in power, Mayer said that consultation and consensus will be the cornerstone of a renewed and strengthened relationship with First Nations, Métis and the Inuit.

The goal of a Liberal government for Aboriginal communities would be to improve Aboriginal socioeconomic outcomes such as education and health and resurrect the Kelowna Accord.

If the Liberals can manage to gain enough seats in Parliament, they would reverse the Conservatives' position and ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. The safety of Aboriginal women would also be a top priority as would jurisdictional issues that impact First Nations children in care.

The New Democratic Party

The NDP's Charlie Angus had his own package of goodies to offer Aboriginal voters including a $5 billion package that would address the shortfalls in health services, housing and infrastructure and other associated programs.

The NDP would remove the INAC's 2% spending cap that has left so many communities with decaying infrastructures because the cap was imposed in 1996.

To address the overrepresentation of Aboriginals in the justice system, the NDP would introduce a "crime policy that will work towards restorative justice and rehabilitation," said Angus.

Angus said the NDP would immediately ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and make major commitments to treaty rights.

Though Jordan's Principle was just made law in Manitoba, Angus said that under the NDP's watch it would be "enshrined into law so that the federal government has to act to ensure the rights of children." This would be to help children in care, medical crisis or education.

The NDP also have an aggressive plan for First Nations' education to address "the systemic neglect that has gone on," so that Aboriginals have the same access to education as the rest of the population.

Among their other campaign promises are plans to help out urban Aboriginals, support language development, help develop community economies, and ensure that residential-school survivors left out by the current agreement are compensated.

Let them eat chips

Some people in Attawapiskat think a local diamond mine might be contaminating the surrounding waters with mercury and poisoning the fish

By Jedidat Matoush

Last March, scientists from the Toronto-based environmental company Gartner Lee travelled to Attawapiskat, a small Ontario town at the mouth of the Attawapiskat River where it flows into the James Bay, and studied the condition of the water surrounding the community.

On March 25, the company released a report stating that its studies had discovered high levels of mercury in both the water and the fish. It recommended to the community band members that only a certain amount of fish be eaten per week and that some types, such as Walleye and white fish, should be eaten only once a month because of their high mercury content. Ever since the tests were carried out, local residents have been catching deformed fish, some with no eyes or no fins.

Like this wasn't bad enough, the community only received a memo, three months later, in June, when Deputy Chief Theresa Spence finally got around to releasing it.

"How can we eat only one fish per week?" questioned Attawapiskat resident Greg Shisheesh. "We smoke them, boil them, squish them into pieces. We make fish cakes. It's not just fish, it's a lifestyle."

Located only 90 kms west of the community is a large diamond mine named the Victor Project, which is owned by De Beers Canada. In February 2006, the company started constructing the mine, which had its grand opening this July.

I began my search for some answers. Was the fish truly that contaminated? And if it was, why did the band wait three whole months to advise its people? Was De Beers causing the contamination? And what were the people to eat in a community of 1500 where there is barely a grocery store and where six apples cost almost $7? Chips and Coke though are not as expensive making them a cheap and accessible option for most.

After contacting De Beers, the Attawapiskat Band Office and several Attawapiskat residents, I began to realize that finding answers was going to be difficult. I contacted De Beers first and then the band office, both places recommended that I speak to Suzanne Barnes, Director of Lands and Resources for the Attawapiskat First Nation. When I first read her title, I was sure I would be speaking to an angry community member who would be out for justice for Attawapiskat's people, but to the contrary, she seemed very tilted towards defending De Beers.

"The community is looking for a drinking water source and according to the tests the water from the river is in much better condition to drink than the groundwater around the community," she said.

That sounds like good news, now what about the fish? "It has nothing to do with De Beers. That has always happened in nature and people can eat them like they always have. The warning of one fish per month was a misunderstanding. The fish are the same as they have always been.

"The mine has barely gotten into operation. The mine has just started dumping water so it hasn't yet come into contact with anything. You could drink what falls out of the pipe although it might not taste that good!" she continued.

> "HOW CAN WE EAT ONLY ONE FISH PER WEEK? WE SMOKE THEM, BOIL THEM, SQUISH THEM INTO PIECES. WE MAKE FISH CAKES. IT'S NOT JUST FISH, IT'S A LIFESTYLE."

I soon found myself in a "he said, she said" situation, where De Beers was blaming Mother Nature and the people of Attawapiskat where pointing fingers at the mining company.

So I asked to see some evidence of the contamination. First I asked for the tests results done by Gartner Lee. The company refused to send them to me, stating that it works by contract and every contract is private.

So, I asked the Attawapiskat Band Office for a copy of the memo which was sent out to the community. After calling the office numerous times over a period of a month, I gave up and never did receive it. I then asked if Barnes could send me some test results that were taken before the Victor Project started and then recent test results of the water's condition. That too, I never received. Although Barnes helped me a great deal with my research, I still don't have proof to back up any of the statements that were done by De Beers or by residents of the community.

When I spoke to Jerry Nakogee, I received the same explanation of the situation that other community members had given me previously. "We know that there has always been mercury in our fish. But since the mine has been there, the mercury has gone up three times higher than before," he said.

Since the people of Attawapiskat have little trust in the companies that do the testing, they have researched it themselves, and now believe they are not being respected. This is where the Impact Benefit Agreement comes in.

The agreement was created by the Attawapiskat band council and De Beers in order to protect Attawapiskat from the effects the mine might have on the surroundings. The IBA states that De Beers will help protect the land and the rivers around the town of Attawapiskat.

"The IBA in itself though is not helping the community members, it only benefits the company," stated a frustrated Shisheesh.

But this isn't what Barnes had to say about the agreement when asked if she felt it was being respected. "I am responsible for chapter 7 of the IBA which concerns environmental issues, and I feel that it is being respected. Any issue that has come up has been quickly resolved."

What I came to understand was that people from the community are being accused of overreacting to the whole situation. According to Barnes, the memo sent out by the Deputy Chief after a meeting with Gartner Lee was based on research done by one person who never visited Attawapiskat and did tests on the water in a comfy Toronto lab. People were simply misunderstanding the memo and there was never any reason for a warning to be sent out.

Hmm this seems fishy indeed... If this was all true then I wonder why Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Hall refused to attend the mine's grand opening in July. When I tried to contact her, Hall was too busy to talk to me.

"People don't like change, no matter where you live," explained Barnes. "There are many people around here running around with their own agendas saying that they have Native People interests at heart when really they don't."

So here I have it then. Some people told me that De Beers is responsible for the mercury level in the Attawapiskat River. Then I spoke to Barnes who said that this was an overreaction and that everything was just fine. I would certainly like to be able to draw my own conclusions but without tests results, memos or any type of proof, this is difficult for me to do!

> "WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR MONEY AND WE ARE NOT TRYING TO BE DIFFICULT. WHAT WE DEMAND IS FOOD SO THAT MY PEOPLE CAN EAT."

All I know is that the people of Attawapiskat need to eat, not just anything but their traditional foods that they've been eating for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Whether the fish is contaminated by the Victor Project or not, someone needs to step up and provide the local people with another option. While the De Beers mine workers feast on meat, potatoes and vegetables every night, an entire Nation only 90 kms away are being told not to eat their main staple anymore – or at least not as much.

"We are not asking for money and we are not trying to be difficult," said Shisheesh. "What we demand is food so that my people can eat."

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For those who are not aware, the NWAC estimates there are literally hundreds of missing or murdered Aboriginal women across Canada. The question is why are women being targeted? To draw awareness to this crisis, the NWAC, through its Sisters in Spirit initiative, is hosting the 3rd Annual SIS Vigil on Parliament Hill and across Canada on October 4th, 2008.

For mor information:
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Summer of Swarms

According to Police Commissioner Ashley Iserhoff, youth violence isn't just about the kids, it's also about parents

By Amy German

Though the Cree Nation, like any other community, is not immune to violence, the nature of the violence, particularly that involving youth, has taken on a new face as youth-gang activity is on the rise and with it has come a rash of swarming attacks.

In the dead of the summer, two different individuals were randomly attacked by swarms of youths to the extent that they had to be medivaced to Montreal hospitals. First it was Edward Bearskin, who was brutally attacked one morning in Chisasibi by nine young males - five were minors and four adults and some were apparently members of a gang known as the "Sam gang".

A month later, John Blackned also became the victim of a swarming attack in Nemaska. This time Blackned was attacked by five women and two men. Of the females, two were minors and three were over the age of 18 and the guys, who were also minors, were also alleged gang members.

Both men were brutally beaten with wood 2x 4s and both supposedly had nothing to with their attacks other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

At the same time *the Nation* has been hearing rumours of similar attacks throughout the summer months. Many of them have apparently not been reported to the authorities. Though swarming attacks are not exclusive to the Cree communities and have been documented internationally, they are an emerging reality that will require new strategies, and according to Cree Police Commissioner Ashley Iserhoff, those strategies are in the works.

Though the new police commission will only officially be up and running sometime late in the winter, there are strategies to combat gang violence that are already being used within the communities according to Iserhoff. At that, going on recommendations from external police forces, new strategies will also come into play.

The tactics will not just be a police matter. When it comes to youths and violence, finding solutions will be both familial and community affairs, according to Iserhoff.

"There is going to be a process where we are going to be establishing local police and public-security committees in every community to get people involved and volunteer their time to give us ideas as to what the police can do," said Iserhoff.

Though it is already happening in some schools, police efforts to go into classrooms to talk to students about drugs, alcohol, violence and "making the right choices" will be stepped up under Iserhoff's watch.

Though it is difficult in any community to point the finger at one specific cause for these types of random senseless violence, Iserhoff has his own ideas as to why the activity has taken on a new form - media and family.

In his mind, children have been exposed to exponentially more violence in recent years from TV, the Internet and violent videogames. New attitudes are emerging from these forms of entertainment that youth devote endless hours to, particularly the ideology that being in a gang or serving jail time is something to "brag" about.

For as much as youth violence is a universal issue, as far as Iserhoff was concerned, these recent swarming attacks and acts of gang violence go against Cree fundamentals.

"That way of life is being disrespectful towards the way our grandparents raised our parents and how our people raised each other," said Iserhoff.

Whereas it's one thing to condemn the violence, Iserhoff is looking for families to take more responsibility for their children to keep them from getting into trouble in the first place.

"Every mother and father has a responsibility to take care of their kids, it's mind-boggling that sometimes when you are in the communities you see eight, nine and ten year-olds roaming around at 10:30pm," said Iserhoff.

"EVERY MOTHER AND FATHER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR KIDS."

Though he himself does not have children, youth violence is a particularly sensitive issue for Iserhoff and an area that he will be focusing on a great deal as it touches his own heart. As a child he experienced what it was like to be the victim of other youths, having been bullied to the extent that he left the Cree communities to attend school in Montreal.

Though, in his own case, things turned out positively in the end, Iserhoff recognizes that the vast majority of Cree kids do not have the option of simply relocating when they find themselves either victim to or involved with a violent movement at the hands of their peers.

Still, despite the recent bout of violent acts, Iserhoff is feeling positive that it is not too late to break the cycle of youth violence and gang-related incidents in the communities.

"The most interesting thing that comes to my mind is that our communities are very small compared to places I have been to and we are in a situation where we can change things now instead of letting it continue. The violent acts that took place, we can change all of that," said Iserhoff.

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VOTE SUNUNU NOVEMBER 4

Environment -- New Hampshire is second to none when it comes to protecting its water, air and land for our children and grandchildren. The Granite State's home-grown conservation and environmental organizations work hand-in-hand with the hunting, fishing, hiking, boating, and tourism communities to achieve a balanced, "multi-use" approach to conservation. In that spirit, Senator Sununu is committed to protecting New Hampshire's lands and waterways through expanding designated wilderness areas, fostering clean energy development, establishing reachable goals to mitigate climate change, and by supporting the strict enforcement of our nation's clean air and water laws and regulations.

Protecting Forests the New Hampshire Way -- John sponsored and succeeded in passing the New England Wilderness Act of 2006, which expanded wilderness in the White Mountain National Forest by 34,500 acres and incorporated approximately 42,000 acres in Vermont under wilderness protection. John also secured assistance and land for a number of critical conservation initiatives, including the expansion of the Lamprey River Wild and Scenic designation, permanent conservation of 171,000 acres in Pittsburg, Clarksville, and Stewartstown, and protection of sensitive lands in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and Ossipee and Moose Mountain Ranges.

Clean Renewable Energy -- John led the Senate in passing the Clean Energy Tax Stimulus Act – bipartisan legislation that is not only right for the environment, but also good for the renewables industry in New Hampshire and across the nation. This legislation is integral in developing clean energy alternatives to fossil fuel by extending incentives for the production of renewable electricity from wind, biomass, and geothermal sources. The bill also extends a number of incentives to encourage the purchase of solar property, energy-efficient construction or modifications of homes and businesses, and production of energy-saving appliances. John also worked to include a biomass property tax credit, which is important to New Hampshire's wood and forestry industries and will assist families in using a cleaner and more energy and cost-efficient heating source.

Protecting New Hampshire's air – For too long, New Hampshire's air has suffered from the damaging effects of Midwestern power plant emissions. When the Environmental Protection Agency proposed weakening the Clean Air Act's standards, John voted to force those plants to clean up their emissions as the law intended and supported New Hampshire's regional lawsuits to enforce strict standards.

Staying Tough on Mercury -- John is an outspoken advocate of tougher national mercury standards. While New Hampshire has made tremendous strides in reducing in-state mercury emissions, tighter federal regulations are needed to prevent Midwestern power plants from emitting toxic mercury plumes in our state's direction. John called on the Environmental Protection Agency to approve the Northeast Regional Mercury Reduction Plan and is a lead sponsor of the Mercury Emissions Control Act to reduce mercury emissions by 90 percent.

Keeping Granite State Water Clean – John continues to work with cities and towns across New Hampshire to clean up our lakes, rivers, and streams. From Portsmouth to Nashua, Berlin to Somersworth, and Jaffrey to Manchester, John strives to bring federal, state, and local funds together to upgrade wastewater systems and meet tough clean water standards. Year after year, John supports grants to help repair and rebuild aging water and wastewater infrastructure in our towns and cities. Moreover, John is a steward of clean water in the Senate, and, in 2003, led the fight to protect the Granite State's drinking water by filibustering the administration-backed Energy Bill – a bill that would have prevented New Hampshire from forcing major oil companies to cleanup groundwater contamination.

Sensible Approach to Climate Change -- John is a lead sponsor of the bipartisan Clean Air Planning Act, aimed at reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide, and mercury through market-oriented solutions. The bill sets realistic standards for reducing emissions and would cut carbon dioxide from power plants by 57 percent, sulfur dioxide emissions by 82 percent, nitrogen oxide emissions by 68 percent, and mercury emissions by 90 percent. This bill is good for public health and environment, and it will also help keep New Hampshire's tourism-based economy strong.

Energy - There is no "magic bullet" to immediately solve our energy crisis, but by focusing on investments in alternative energy sources, allowing new domestic energy production, and improving regulation of energy markets, we can make our country more energy independent and provide relief from record-high gas and oil prices. John continues his fight to reduce high gasoline prices and implement a long-term energy policy for the nation by co-sponsoring the "Gasoline Price Reduction Act of 2008." This bill encourages development of plug-in electric cars and trucks, strengthens oversight of the energy futures market, and allows additional deep-sea energy exploration and oil shale production.

Community Violence

This letter is a response to the article in a recent issue of *the Nation* (Vol. 15, No. 22). Here are my comments and opinions of what happened to me.

The way I see life in my community has changed knowing that we have serious cases of mental and emotional instability portrayed by our local teenagers (boys/girls). Their anger and frustration with daily life have escalated to a level where they show no remorse for their actions. Who do we attack when this sort of situation grows in our communities?

The teenagers – who I had some respect for as human beings – have now changed too, like everyone who has their own mental and emotional problems. They knew who I was and I knew them, at least that is what I thought. I have mixed emotions about the ordeal. What did I do to them? The question lingers in my head, if they have no remorse whatsoever of what they did… some even bragged about their actions to one of my brothers and uttered threats at the same time.

I am a victim who received a 2x4 blow to the jaw that caused severe fractures in three places. I am lucky they didn't crack my head open at the same and I am able to watch my kids again playing in puddles of water after a rain shower and take them sliding when it is possible. In a way it made me realize that life is precious and how important I am to my children (my two-year-old son and three-year-old daughter). My wife tells me that every day I was away our children were always looking for me around the house when they would come home after daycare and school. Yes, I do have that kind of relationship with them and with the help of god I will not let that slip away nor will ever be naïve believing I am safe in my own community.

What to think of the teenagers involved? I really do not know at this time. Two of them are close cousins of mine – talk about family issues. I never realized they had anything against me. The group of the so-called "NWO" of Nemaska tend to make a reputation for themselves by attacking people who are drunk and cannot defend themselves. It was no accident. They have similar incidents on acts of violence as the one they put me through, except I received the most vicious of all attacks as of yet.

What will the community do when one day they learn that this group has killed someone? The group had a gun incident in the community and what was done about that? Nothing and I have no idea, why? What kind of idiot would believe these kids accused of carrying guns in our community and for someone to actually defend them saying they were in the middle of their hunting activity. Now who goes out hunting at midnight? Is there a record involving these kids about that incident or was it just scrapped? Will they keep on walking around like they have done nothing wrong in this community? Like always let's just wait until somebody winds up dead attitude.

That very same night some of these boys assaulted our local police officers. What did the police do? I don't know but an assault on a police officer is very serious. I don't think it is a good idea to let them have that power or feeling they can get away with anything they want. It's time we do something about it because who would have known if no one came around to help me when I was down. Who knows how far they could have gone?

Now what do I do if I want to socialize with my friends again, do I have a right to be scared? I would be scared if they always had a 2x4 at hand to attack anyone or me. Do I now have the right to carry weapon to defend myself? What do I do when they attack in a place where no one is around and thus saying being surrounded by a bunch of kids aiming to hurt me. Do I plead for my life or do I break a few kneecaps to defend myself? I know these kids have threatened my family and even one of them bragged about the 2x4 incident. Honestly when is a young offender going to be responsible for their actions on that level of assault with a deadly weapon. We have heard of young offenders charged as adults. Why not this case??? Maybe it would have, if I wound up dead, right?

I believe the system should change regarding young offenders who have no respect for the law and the well being of other people and property. The community should not turn their back and ignore when something like this happens in the community. I for one will not let this slip that easy, I have taken the first step but others have to help in making something happen. People may be asking themselves does this guy have revenge in his mind? Of course, and the best revenge for me is getting these kids a real taste of the justice system. I just hope our community can wake up and see it was not only me that would have been robbed of life but also my kids and family.

It was nice to be welcomed home by many of my friends and some who never ever said hello walking down the streets of Nemaska. Yes, coming home is great, being able to see my friends, family and, best of all, my children.

John Blackned, Nemaska

In loving memory of Mary Alice Rabbitskin a.k.a. JooJet

D.O.B. January 1, 1943 went home July 28, 2008.

First and foremost I would like to thank God for letting me know Mary Alice, also known as JooJet. When I first heard the news it was like a shock to me. I couldn't believe it I kept saying in my mind it can't be true. But I know she has gone home to a better place where there is no pain nor sickness.

I knew Mary Alice when I was in Montreal in June. She had told me that she had been there for quite a long time at John Mianscum's place. She was such a nice, loving, and caring lady. She really enjoyed talking about her children and grandchildren. She really missed them and could hardly wait to go back to Mistissini to see them. She was like a mother, very caring, and showed her love towards me.

continued from page 14

is not the case. Other countries have used carbon taxes and cap-and-trade systems with great success. We would not be the first. And by setting that example for the rest of the world, we would hopefully not be the last.

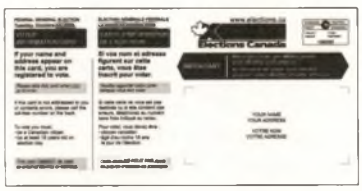
If we don't do anything for the environment now, the problems will increase to a point where we will have to do something if we want to survive, and because of the extent of the damage, by then, it will cost a lot.

A party gets $1.75 for each vote they get. If the party you vote for this time doesn't win, it'll get more money to finance a better campaign and have a better chance at winning next time around.

Voting for a party that'll do something for the environment is important, because something needs to be done before it's too late. Find out as much as you can, talk to your representatives, and always remember, every single vote counts, no matter how small and insignificant it may seem. You can help make a change for a better environment, and a better world.

On Tuesday October 14, I can choose to make a difference. I can vote!

To vote, electors must prove their identity and address.



Did you receive this card?

Keep the voter information card you received by mail from Elections Canada. It tells you where and when to vote. You'll get through the voting process more quickly if you have it with you.

If you haven't received it, or if you found an error in your name or address, please phone your local Elections Canada office. You'll find the number at **www.elections.ca** by clicking on "Voter Information Service".

Where and when to vote?

Advance voting

You can vote before election day. Advance voting will be held Friday, October 3, Saturday, October 4 and Monday, October 6, from noon to 8:00 p.m. Locations of advance polling stations appear on the back of the voter information card.

You can vote by mail or at your local Elections Canada office using the special ballot if you make the request by 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 7.

To download the registration form, go to **www.elections.ca** and click on "I'm Mailing My Vote!", or call Elections Canada to obtain the form and information.

Do you know the new identification rules to vote?

When you vote, you must prove your identity and address.

For the list of acceptable pieces of identification authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, please see the pamphlet that you received by mail from Elections Canada, visit **www.elections.ca** and click "Aboriginal Voters", or call our toll-free number.

To vote, you must:
- be a Canadian citizen
- be at least 18 years old on election day
- **prove your identity and address**

You can choose to make a difference.

www.elections.ca

1-800-INFO-VOTE
1-800-463-6868
toll-free in Canada and the United States,
or 001-800-514-6868 toll-free in Mexico

TTY 1-800-361-8935
for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, toll-free in Canada and the United States, or 613-991-2082 from anywhere in the world

Elections Canada

Her children always called her and checked up on her to see how she was doing. She would always say "I'm okay, I am not sick". Even though she was down South she still had the chance to eat traditional food, which she really enjoyed.

I remember one time I was at the shopping mall in Montreal. I saw her with her husband Johnny and his son Paul and with Paul's family. She was in a wheelchair and her husband was pushing her around. Then we headed to Walmart to do more shopping. Her daughter-in-law Nancy went to look for a wheelchair for her. They did not have one but what they had was much better, it was a scooter. Alice just laughed and said "I will not know how to use that."

Nancy told her it was very easy so she gave it a try. We told her it was like a bike but don't push the button too fast and she laughed again. The scooter had a basket on the front of it. Once she got on she rode the scooter and we all walked behind her. We all laughed as she drove it. Nancy's daughter Kara was so amazed at her grandmother.

When we arrived at the store we went our different ways. I could see Mary Alice driving around and talking on her cell phone at the same time. I could hear her laughing away. She was able to drive that scooter with no problem at all.

After our shopping was done we went to have supper. After supper Paul drove us back to John's place where we said our goodbyes. When we arrived at John's place Mary Alice was sharing her story about the scooter. Everybody who was there laughed with her. She said, with a laugh, "Now I can drive a car!"

Every time I went to visit my mother at the hospital Mary Alice would always ask me how she was doing, so I would tell her about her situation. She always gave me advice and said to not worry about her. I would tell her "I will tell my mom what you said.". She did that every time I came back from visiting my mom.

You could tell she really cared for her and for other people. She always reminded me not to worry about my mom and that she would be okay. I always told her that there was someone watching over her day and night.

I can still remember her cell phone ring tone: I Walk the Line. I asked her about it and she replied that her granddaughter Shirley-Ann did it for her. I told her "Wow!" and she just laughed.

Even though I only knew her for awhile, I felt as if I knew her for a long time. I will surely miss her and cherish memories of her close to my heart. I had a lot of love for her, her husband, her children and grandchildren.

To the family and children of the late Mary Alice Rabbitskin:

Thank you for letting me have the privilege of getting to know your mother/grandmother, she was a very special and caring lady with a lot of wisdom and knowledge of the traditional way of life.

With love and prayers,

Stephanie Meskino

TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE IMPORTANT SERVICE TO CREE NATION

Seeking two candidates from each Cree community to become boat safety instructors

The Federal Government has already passed a law which requires that the following people obtain a **Pleasure Craft Operator Card**:

- All operators of any powered watercraft under 4 m in length (13.1 feet)
- All operators of personal watercraft (sea-doos and jet skis)
- All operators of any powered watercraft born after April 1, 1983
- As of September 15, 2009 all boaters will be required to have the **Pleasure Craft Operator Card** in order to operate a powered watercraft. There is no grandfather clause or age exemption, this law applies to all boaters. Powered watercraft includes watercraft fitted with any size motor-even trolling motors.

Although there is an exemption in this law for aboriginal people if the boat is being used for sustenance purposes (such as sustenance hunting or fishing). If the aboriginal person is using a boat for a recreational boating activity or for work (guiding, slashing, construction and Hydro-Quebec etc.) then a Pleasure Craft Operator Card is required

The **Cree Trappers' Association** is seeking two candidates from each Cree community to become boat safety instructors. This program is being assisted by **Niskamoon Corporation**.

For more information please contact:
Rick Cuciurean,
Special Projects Coordinator,
Cree Trappers' Association
Box 59, Eastmain, Quebec,
J0M 1W0
Phone: 819 977 2165
Fax: 819 977 2168
Email: rickcuccta@tlb.sympatico.ca

NEEDED

Does anyone have old photos and especially old film footage from the late 1960s and 70s in the Cree communities ? Or even in the cities when you old guys were young hippies at school?

Neil Diamond is doing a documentary called REEL INJUN about the image of Indians in Hollywood films and he would love to include pictures and especially film footage of Crees with headbands - being groovy back in the day.

The film will be shown in theatres and on television in the USA, Canada and Europe.

Please contact Neil directly at 514-272-3077. Thanks.

Le mardi 14 octobre, je peux faire un geste qui compte. Je peux voter!

Pour voter, les électeurs doivent prouver leur identité et leur adresse.

Avez-vous reçu cette carte?
Conservez la carte d'information de l'électeur que vous a envoyée Elections Canada. Elle vous indique où et quand voter. Le processus de vote sera plus rapide si vous l'avez en main.

Si vous ne l'avez pas reçue, ou si vous avez trouvé une erreur dans votre nom ou votre adresse, communiquez avec votre bureau local d'Élections Canada. Vous trouverez le numéro de téléphone à **www.elections.ca** en cliquant sur « Service d'information à l'électeur ».

Où et quand voter?

Vote par anticipation
Vous pouvez voter avant le jour de l'élection. Le vote par anticipation aura lieu le vendredi 3 octobre, le samedi 4 octobre et le lundi 6 octobre, de midi à 20 h. Les adresses des bureaux de vote par anticipation figurent au verso de la carte d'information de l'électeur.

Vous pouvez voter par la poste ou à votre bureau local d'Élections Canada au moyen du bulletin de vote spécial, si vous en faites la demande au plus tard le mardi 7 octobre à 18 h.

Vous pouvez télécharger le formulaire d'inscription disponible à **www.elections.ca** en cliquant sur « Mon vote, je le poste! », ou téléphoner à Élections Canada pour l'obtenir et poser vos questions.

Connaissez-vous les nouvelles mesures d'identification pour voter?
Au moment de voter, vous devez prouver votre identité et votre adresse.

Pour consulter la liste des pièces d'identité acceptées par le directeur général des élections du Canada, veuillez consulter le dépliant d'Élections Canada que vous avez reçu par la poste, visitez le site **www.elections.ca** et cliquez sur « Électeurs autochtones » ou composez notre numéro sans frais.

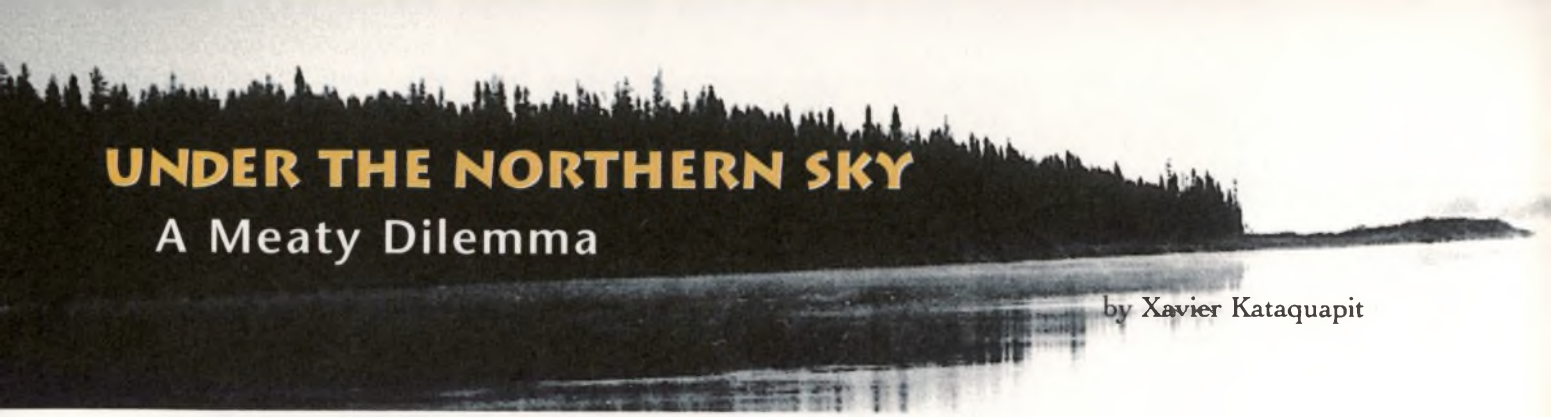
Pour voter, vous devez :
- être citoyen canadien;
- être âgé d'au moins 18 ans le jour de l'élection;
- prouver votre identité et votre adresse.

Vous pouvez faire un geste qui compte.

www.elections.ca

1-800-INFO-VOTE
1-800-463-6868
sans frais au Canada et aux États-Unis, ou
001-800-514-6868 sans frais au Mexique
ATS 1-800-361-8935
pour les personnes sourdes ou malentendantes, sans frais au Canada et aux États-Unis, ou 613-991-2082 de partout au monde

Elections Canada



UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

A Meaty Dilemma

by Xavier Kataquapit

The average diet on the James Bay coast is still more-or-less based on a means of survival. People enjoy living off the land by hunting and gathering different foods such as geese, moose, caribou and a variety of fish. This is a diet that has fed my people for thousands of years.

Today we have a choice of what to eat but many James Bay Cree still prefer the taste of food that has been harvested from the land. People have the option of visiting the community grocery store to buy ready-made food and this is easy and fast. However, buying food in an isolated community in the north is still based on a survivalist mentality. Instead of trying to gather food from the land, shoppers seek out food that is the least expensive and products that will last a long time.

Transporting food to the north is no easy task and by the time groceries have arrived, prices have been marked up substantially to take in the cost of air travel, travel by barge or by winter road. The amount of time it takes to transport this food also affects the type of food that arrives in the community. If it takes days for grocery products to be transported in a variety of types of transports, then fresh foods are out of the question. Instead most foods that arrive in the north come in cans, plastic packages and cardboard.

There is a practical issue when it comes to canned foods. When people go out on the land, they want to bring with them prepackaged food that will not spoil. At the start of goose-hunting season, many hunters head out on the land with nothing but their cans of food in anticipation of a harvest of fresh geese for the season.

However, there are many questions about these canned and packaged foods. These products are prewrapped, precooked, processed, amended and flavoured. All this is done in an effort to preserve the food for weeks and even months after it has been initially packaged. At the start of production, food is also produced in a cost-effective manner to reduce the final cost at the store. Meats of all types are preprocessed and injected with all sorts of preservatives and mixed together in an endless mass production line. This means that the food is treated more as a product to sell to someone rather than something that will provide a good healthy meal to a family.

The recent listeria contamination has raised new and old questions about the safety of processed foods. To date this food contamination has made many people sick across the country and a dozen are now reported to have died. Listeria is a bacterium that causes listeriosis. This bacterium is found in soil, vegetation, sewage, water and the feces of animals and humans. Eating foods that have the bacteria can cause serious illness including brain and blood infection and even death in extreme cases.

One of the surprising things that I discovered from this recent food scare was the fact that there had been recommendations from Health Canada stating that pregnant women, the elderly and immuno-compromised patients should avoid cold cuts and some other deli foods because of the risk of contracting listeriosis or other foodborne illnesses. Before the contamination made headlines across the country, this was a low-key recommendation that few people knew about. It certainly was not well known in the Native community where our Elders regularly consume this type of food in an effort to save a bit of money.

Older people in general tend to be more careful with their money. Our Elders in the north understand the value of money, no matter how little, so they make their dollars stretch as far as they can. They are on fixed incomes so they tend to shop for deals. The problem is that many times, these savings occur at the cost of a person's health with the purchase of unhealthy foods. I remember watching many of our Elders in the north purchase and consume canned meats and prepackaged foods in order to save a few dollars. What our Elders really prefer is to sit with the rest of their family when out on the land to eat whatever wild game is being served.

Many of our people have questioned the health value and safety of these packaged foods for many years. In northern isolated communities, the rate of cancers related to the bowels and digestive tract are high. It does not take a professional with years of training to figure out that what we eat directly causes what afflicts our communities. However, most Native people are stuck in a cycle of poverty so they are forced to buy cheaper processed foods. No doubt they would all prefer to buy steaks and chops but the sad reality is that most of the time they end up with hot dogs, cold cuts and canned stews and soups.

My friend Sarah suggested to me recently that the best solution is to just give up store-bought meat altogether. Perhaps she has the right idea. Faced with all the problems with meats these days becoming a vegetarian does have its merits. Anybody for Tofu hot dogs?

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHS

I would like to congratulate to my friend Patricia Trapper & her boyfriend Conrad Happyjack on the new arrival of their baby girl Danika Cheryl Emiy Happyjack. Born in Chibougamau on August 29 (I think...lol) weighing 9 lbs & 11 oz. Congratulations again!!! from Judy (Chis)

BIRTHDAYS

Happy 2nd Birthday to my nephew Spencer Tomatuk who celebrated on September 6. Love you!! Luv Auntie Neen (Krystine) & Dale xoxo

I would like to wish a Happy 1st birthday to my niece Julius Saige Diamond, on September 7,2008 & to my nephew Dakota Wapachee on September 9,2008. I hope you had lots of fun! I miss you guys & I'll see you soon. Love always, your aunty Tina..x0x

I Would like to wish a happy birthday to me Heather NineO'clock and my twin sister Suzanne Louise NineO'clock on September 23,2008 we'll be turning 14 which I'll still be annoying and buggy lol and Suzanne will be so MEAN!!! and BOSSY!!!! LOL I still love her in some kind of way jabweh just kidding Suzannerr I love you so much!! love always: Heather NineO'clock your annoying twin.

We would like to wish our Tony Max a happy 2nd birthday on Sept. 14th. We hope you enjoy your birthday party and I know you'll enjoy eating your geeg. With lots of love & kisses, Mom, Dad and big brother Marcus.

I want to say Happy 4th Birthday to my beautiful son Charlie Niquanicappo on September 10th. I love you with all my heart and I thank the Creator for giving me a child like you. I hope you have a great party! Love, Mom and Dad (Mary Niquanicappo and Michael Weetaltuk).

We want to wish a happy birthday to our one and only son Marcus Brandon Lee Jolly-Whiskeychan who will be celebrating his 7th birthday on Oct. 19, 2008. I can't believe you'll be seven years old! I still remember the day you were born, it was a very special day for me, I had tears of joy. I'll make sure you will have a very special day, as special as you are to us. And be nice to your little sissy's! Once again happy 7th birthday to our son Marcus! Love always, Mom and Dad (Bella and Mario from WASK)

Kateleen Bella Joylynn Jolly-Whiskeychan will be celebrating her 2nd birthday on October 1st and we want to wish her a happy birthday. My boodooful girl you are growing up so fast! May this day be special and may you have lots of fun! We love you so much, our baby girl! Mommy and Daddy will always take care of you no matter what. Love you lots! From Mommy and Daddy (Bella and Mario from WASK)

Happy Birthday to my son on Sept.11, "My Star," Akian Herodier, Happy 12th Birthday, keep your dreams alive by working on them everyday. Respect yourself, your family and those around you. You can achieve what you wish in this life, if you work hard in getting there. It may be a hard road, but it will be fun getting there. Love u moosh, dad xoxoxoxo

Our baby girl will have her 1st birthday on September 19...HAPPY 1st BIRTHDAY NAOMI JANE MATTHEW!! We love you very much, you are so adorable in every way...from Mommy, Daddy, brothers & sisters.

Happy Birthday to Jeffrey Cookish and Brian Sam on Sept 19th also...from Pauline...and to the two adorable girls who will celebrate their 1st birthday on Sept 16th - to Jaylene & Jolene Moses - God bless you girls as you turn a year old...with all our love.

Happy birthday to my brother Akain'sh who celebrated on September 12. Love your bro Dale & from Krystine

Hello! I want to wish Happy Birthday to my dear husband, Jean-Marc Wapachee. His birthday was on Sept 22, 2007. I love you and I hope you will have a great time in the bush. Please kill a moose for me and your kids. We are hungry for it. Lol! Love lots love to you. From: Ur wife Irene M & kids... Happy birthday again.

WEDDINGS

Congratulations to Cindy Cookish & Jamie Moses who will be married on the 19th of September...God bless you both as you pledge your vows to Him. May He take care of you both & as you take this step to be united in marriage. Love you both very much and only wish the best for you...From Pauline in Chisasibi.

ANNIVERSARIES

I Would like to wish a Happy Anniversary to my Honey Cathy Metabie and Norman Trapper on September 22 2008, the day before my and my twin's birthday! From: Heather NineOclock!

We want to wish a happy anniversary to our grandparents Joey and Lynn Whiskeychan on Oct. 14, 2008. We hope both of you will have a very special day, as special as you are to us. Happy anniversary to both of you! With love, from your grandchildren Marcus, Marisa, Mya and Kateleen (Wask).

Happy 1st anniversary to my Silly Rabbit on Sept. 22, 2008! I will love you with all my heart and soul, forever and a day! From: Honey Bunny

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line:
1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline:
1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline:
1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:
1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolence-conjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center:
1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline:
1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:
1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Residential School Survivors:
A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html.

APPOINTMENT

Raymond Thibault, President and CEO of the Société de développement de la Baie-James (SDBJ) is proud to announce the appointment of Pierre Jr Chevrier as Economic Development Advisor. Mr. Chevrier will also be responsible for the SDBJ's sustainable development action plan.

Pierre Jr Chevrier is a born entrepreneur and holds a Business Management degree from l'École des hautes études commerciales. He has worked as a management consultant as well as in business financing. Recently, he was responsible for the creation of the very first co-op on renewable energy development in Quebec.

Mr. Chevrier will be in charge of building relationships with the Cree communities in order to create and sustain economic development initiatives.

The SDBJ is responsible for promoting, from a sustainable development perspective, the economic development, valorization and exploitation of the natural resources, other than hydroelectric resources, of the James Bay territory.

JOINING FORCES
SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES

Société de développement de la Baie-James
Québec

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Wasayabin challenge

for Eeyou Istchee

CF30-30

**(CF-Cree foods, at least 3 meals of CF per week,
0 tolerance for tobacco, 30 minutes of physical activitiy daily)**

goal

As a participant, I will need to maintain the following for 6 weeks:

- Have at least 3 meals of Cree foods per week
- Stop smoking cigarettes and using other tobacco products
- Be physically active for 30 minutes daily (A daily recordkeeping journal has to be completed)

Wasayabin Challenge is open to all residents of Eeyou Itschee.

starts

Monday, October 6th, 2008

finishes

Monday, November 17th, 2008

categories

Youth (12 to 17 years old)
Adult (18 years old and over)

Registration forms available at Clinics. Stores. Schools. Band Offices or online at
http://wasayabin.creepublichealth.org

Great prizes to be won!!

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